

# ROMANS

COMENTARY

## ***Romans Introduction.***

### **Introduction To The Book Of Romans.**

The book of Romans is the longest and the clearest exposition by the Apostle Paul on the Gospel. This book contains the doctrinal foundation for the Christian faith, and it is for this reason that it was arranged first in order among the New Testament epistles. The truths presented here must be understood before proceeding to other doctrinal matters.

In this letter, Paul dealt with a larger number of doctrinal issues than in any other of his epistles. His treatment of the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith was so masterfully done that its divine inspiration cannot be questioned. The depth with which Paul treated these great subjects shows that this knowledge was truly given to him by the direct revelation of God (Galatians 1:12).

An understanding of the truths in Ro 3 transformed Martin Luther's personal life and ignited the fires of the Reformation that shook the world. Indeed, an understanding of the truths expressed in this book are essential not only to the salvation of every individual but also to the maturing and success of every Christian.

#### **Authorship.**

Paul is undoubtedly the author of the letter to the Romans. The first verse of this epistle clearly states so (Romans 1:1). There is no dissenting opinion of this among the early writings of the church. The writer also sent greetings to Priscilla and Aquila (Romans 16:3, see [note 2 at Acts 18:2](#)), his helpers, and also to Timotheus, his workfellow (Romans 16:21). The book of Acts confirms these people worked closely with Paul.

#### **The Recipients of the Book of Romans.**

Paul addressed this letter to all the Christians that were in Rome (Romans 1:7). There is no scriptural account of any apostolic mission taking the Gospel to Rome, so it may therefore be supposed that these Christians were converts from the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given (Acts 2:10) and from the personal witness of believers as they traversed the empire.

These saints in Rome were a diverse group: Gentiles who had come from pagan worship to trust in Jesus as their Savior, and devout Jews who had believed in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. This gave rise to many problems among the believers, and these were aggravated, no doubt, by the fact that no apostle had been to Rome to settle disputes and provide doctrinal teaching and guidance.

The Jewish Christians were adamant that the Gentiles had to convert to Judaism through the rite of circumcision. They lacked proper teaching in the revelation of grace that was given to Paul. Therefore, Paul felt an obligation, as the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13), to instruct them in these matters and hence this letter.

#### **Date and Place of Writing.**

This letter to the Romans was probably written during Paul's third missionary trip, around A.D. 57-58, when Paul was in Corinth or that vicinity (Acts 20:2-3).

The date can be deduced from some of Paul's statements in Ro 15:25-28 about how he was headed to Jerusalem to take the offering from the saints in Macedonia (see [note 1 at Acts 16:9](#)) and Achaia (see [note 11 at Acts 18:12](#)) to the poor saints in Judea (see [note 1 at John 4:3](#)). This places the writing of this book toward the end of Paul's third missionary trip (see [note 2 at Acts 18:23](#)) as he headed for Jerusalem.

Phebe, a servant of the church in Cenchræa (see [note 1 at Acts 18:18](#)), was the one who carried this epistle to the church in Rome (Ac 16:1, subscript at Acts 16:27). So it can be supposed that Paul was in Phebe's hometown of Cenchræa or in Corinth (see [note 1 at Acts 18:1](#)) when he wrote this letter.

About the Author.

Some facts about Paul's persecution of the church, his conversion, and the intervening time until the beginning of his ministry have been dealt with in [note 4 at Acts 7:58](#), [note 1 at Acts 9:1](#), and [note 1 at Acts 9:26](#).

Information about Paul's life after the close of the book of Acts is included in [note 1 at Acts 28:30](#). Many notes about Paul's exploits, character, and hardships are found throughout the book of Acts.

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**Romans 1:18.**

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

Paul's purpose in writing Romans 1:18-20 was to explain why the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). The problem was that then, just as now, most people felt the way to get others to come to God was to condemn them and scare them out of hell. People doubted that Paul's good news of the love of God would be enough to cause repentance.

Therefore, Paul began to prove that every person already has an instinctive knowledge of God's wrath against their sin. We don't need to prove God's wrath; God has already done that. What people need to know is the good news that God placed His wrath for our sins upon His own Son so that we could be completely forgiven. This good news will draw people to God more than the bad news will ever drive people to God.

In Romans 1:18-20, Paul was declaring that God has revealed Himself to all mankind. Old Testament scriptures proclaim that God has revealed Himself to everyone through nature (Psalms 19:1-3), but Paul was stating here that there is an intuitive revelation of God within every person.

There are five words used in these three verses to describe the extent to which God has revealed Himself to mankind, and they are worth special note. Any one of these five words used by itself would have made a strong argument for Paul's case. However, the combination of these words in just two sentences emphasizes the certainty of Paul's claims.

The use of the word "all" in Romans 1:18 shows the extent to which God has revealed Himself. God has placed a witness within every person against **all** ungodliness and unrighteousness.

In Romans 1:19, the Greek word that was translated "manifest" is the Greek word "PHANEROS," and it means "shining, i.e. apparent" (Strong's Concordance). The Greek word translated "shewed" in this verse is "PHANEROO," which is derived from PHANEROS. PHANEROO means "to render apparent (literally or figuratively)" (Strong's Concordance). These words make it very clear that this instinctive or intuitive knowledge is not so subtle that it can be overlooked. God gives every individual the right to choose, but there can be no doubt that every person has, at one time, clearly seen and understood (Romans 1:20) the basic truths of God's existence.

In Romans 1:20, Paul said this inner witness of God causes the individual to clearly see the invisible things of God and even understand the Godhead. The Greek word that was translated "clearly seen" is the word "KATHORAO," and it means "to behold fully, i.e. (figuratively) distinctly apprehend" (Strong's Concordance). This leaves no doubt that every person who has ever walked the earth has had a clear revelation of God. The use of the word "understood" emphatically states that God gave man not only knowledge but also the understanding to use that knowledge.

Therefore, no one will be able to stand before God on the Day of Judgment and say, "God is not fair." He has given all people who have ever lived, regardless of how remote or isolated they may have been, the opportunity to know Him. They are without excuse.

Someone might say, "If all this is true, then why can't we observe more of this intuitive knowledge of God in the lives of those who have not heard the Gospel?" Paul gave the answer to this in Romans 1:21-23 .

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**Romans 2:1.**

*Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

. In the preceding chapter, Paul had conclusively proved that the Gentiles were guilty before God. They had no excuse for their vile actions (Romans 1:20). This, no doubt, pleased the Jews. That's exactly what they believed and what they had been arguing. They maintained that unless these Gentiles converted to Judaism and observed the Law of Moses (specifically the law of circumcision), they could not be saved.

However, after Paul had taken full advantage of the Jews' prejudice, he turned his arguments to the Jews, showing them that they were just as guilty or even guiltier than the Gentiles. He ended this chapter with statements about the Gentiles' faith being superior to the Jews' circumcision and concluded a true Jew is born of faith, not of the flesh (Romans 2:28-29).

Thus, the second chapter proves the Jews, or religious persons, are just as guilty before God as the heathen. Then in the third chapter, Paul drew this all together by proclaiming that since everyone, Jew and Gentile, was in "the same boat," then all could be saved by one method of salvation, through faith.

. From a human perspective, some people have obtained a level of holiness that gives them the right to judge others. However, when viewed from God's standpoint, we are all sinners, and one sinner has no justification for condemning a fellow sinner ([Matthew 7:1](#)). We may not be doing the exact same transgressions, but we are guilty of being lawbreakers (Jas 2:10) and are therefore disqualified from being the judge.

Also, whenever people condemn one another, they are showing that they have a knowledge of right and wrong and therefore can no longer claim ignorance for their own offenses. As Ro 2:2 explains, we are better off to leave the judging to God.

. The Greek word that is rendered "judgest" three times in this verse and once in Romans 2:3 is the word "KRINO." It is speaking of a harsh, condemning type of judging that was warned against in

Matthew 7:1. There is a Greek word, "ANAKRINO," that signifies discernment, which is encouraged in Scripture (see [Matthew 7:1](#)).

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**Romans 2:3**

*And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

These pious Jews could have argued with Paul that they were not committing the same sins that these heathens were, but in reality they were. They may not have worshiped idols, but they were covetous. Colossians 3:5 reveals that is idolatry. They may not have committed adultery, but they had lusted in their hearts. Jesus said that was equal to adultery (Matthew 5:28). They may not have murdered anyone, but they had hated. Those both come from the same root sin (Matthew 5:21-22).

When viewed in this way, judgment for others disappears and mercy comes to light.

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**Romans 2:4**

*Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

This is a radical statement that the Jews of Paul's day and the religious legalists of our day reject. They refuse to accept that the goodness of God is sufficient motivation for people to turn from sin. They insist that fear of punishment is a superior motivator.

It is true that fear is a more familiar motivator to most people. Even a lost person or carnal Christian can identify with fear and respond to it. But as 1Jo 4:18 states, "Fear hath torment." Those who respond to God through fear will also be tormented with thoughts of doubt and condemnation as to whether they have done enough. Fear will move some toward God, but it is inferior to love. There is nothing that fear can do that love can't do better and without the side effect of torment.

Those motivated to seek God because of fear if they didn't will cease to be motivated when things are going well. They become the ones who only pray when they are in trouble. Those who come to God because of His goodness will see God as the source of their success and continue to serve God in the good and the bad times.

The world, and especially religion, has used negative reasons to motivate us. The Gospel uses the positive reason of God's great love to draw us unto God. We need to renew our minds to line up with God's thinking.

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**Romans 2:5.**

*But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

The Apostle James said, "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:13). Those who show mercy will be shown mercy, but those who are hardhearted and unmerciful will reap the same when they stand before the judgment seat of God.

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**Romans 2:6.**

*Who will render to every man according to his deeds:*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

Romans 2:6-16 is speaking of the final judgment of God at the end of this world. The Lord will judge us and render a due reward according to every person's work. Although this is true, some have taken these scriptures to mean the opposite of what Paul was saying in context here.

From the context, we see that Paul was preaching that Jews and Gentiles alike have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Therefore, we cannot be saved by our actions (Romans 3:20). The only way to be saved is through faith in Jesus and what He did for us (Romans 3:24-28). Therefore, these verses cannot be contradicting everything else that Paul was saying by proclaiming that acceptance by God is based on performance.

No, the action that will be rewarded with eternal life is the action of faith (Joh 3:16). Faith alone saves, but saving faith is never alone. True faith has actions (James 2:17-20). The Greek word that is translated "do not obey" in Romans 2:8 means "to disbelieve (willfully and perversely)" (Strong's Concordance). So it is faith that is the issue, even though actions are being spoken of.

Therefore, those whose faith is causing them to patiently continue in well doing (Romans 2:7), they will receive eternal life. But those whose rejection of God's mercy causes them to disobey (disbelieve) the truth, they will receive indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish (Romans 2:8-9).

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**Romans 2:14.**

*For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

This is speaking of the intuitive knowledge of God described in Ro 1 ([Romans 1:18](#)).

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**Romans 2:15.**

*Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and [their] thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

The conscience is the part of us that bears witness as to what is right and wrong. This happens through our thoughts either accusing or excusing us. The conscience is a part of the soul ([Matthew 22:37](#)). This can be

deduced from the fact that even a Christian's conscience can be defiled (1Colossians 8:7), evil (Heb 10:22), and weak (1Corinthians 8:7 and 10), but the born-again spirit cannot be ([Matthew 26:41](#)).

A good conscience is essential to faith. Without a good conscience, our faith is made shipwrecked (1Timothy 1:19). A good conscience produces confidence (1 John 3:21 and Hebrew 10:35). An evil conscience condemns us (1 John 3:20).

It is possible that God created man without a conscience and that the conscience was acquired through the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The name of that tree is descriptive of the function of the conscience.

The conscience is referred to by name thirty-one times in twenty-nine verses in the New Testament (Joh 8:9; Ac 23:1, 24:16; Ro 2:15, 9:1, 13:5; 1Co 8:7, 10, 12, 10:25, 27-29; 2Co 1:12, 4:2; 1Ti 1:5, 19, 3:9, 4:2; 2Ti 1:3; Tit 1:15; Heb 9:9, 14, 10:2, 22, 13:18; 1Pe 2:19, 3:16, and 21).

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**Romans 2:16**

*In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*

This is quite a statement of authenticity for the Gospel Paul preached. God didn't get His understanding of the Gospel from Paul, but Paul received his revelation of the Gospel from God. He was so sure of this that he could make statements like this and like that of Galatians 1:8-12.

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**Romans 2:17.**

*Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

It is true that the Jews had been given the Word of God, and this gave them a superior knowledge of God. However, since they had not kept the Law, their superior knowledge had just made them more accountable than other people ([Luke 12:48](#)).

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**Romans 2:21.**

*Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

The Jews took pride in their keeping of the Law, but no Jews could boast that they had kept the Law perfectly ([Mark 10:20](#)). "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Roman 3:23). Paul highlighted three areas where they boasted of their own holiness, but he revealed that they were actually sinners in these very things.

They boasted that they didn't steal, but Paul revealed that they did steal. Jesus also rebuked the Pharisees for stealing. This was not the typical type of theft, but what we would call "white-collar crime."

Paul said that they were adulterers, even though they prided themselves on not committing adultery. They were guilty of spiritual adultery if nothing else (James 4:4), and Jesus had revealed that adultery was also a sin of the heart, even if there was no action (Matthew 5:28).

They also thought they were not idolatrous, but Paul convicted them on this count also. He used the word "sacrilege". This referred to them being temple robbers, thereby making direct reference to their covetousness, which is idolatry (Colossians 3:5).

Therefore, even though they had a form of godliness, they were sinners just like the Gentiles, and their hypocrisy gave the Gentiles a reason to blaspheme God. This led Paul to proclaim that the Jews' claim to some kind of special covenant with God was made void through their breaking of the Law. In the third chapter of Romans, he went on to draw the conclusion that everyone, Jew and Gentile, is in the same condition of sin and needs the same salvation through Christ.

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**Romans 2:25.**

*For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

If Jews could keep the Law perfectly, then the Jewish covenant that was sealed with the sign of circumcision would give them an advantage over others. But that has never, and can never, happen. No one can keep the Law, and the Law was not given to provide a way to God (see [Matthew 19:17](#)). Therefore, because Jews have never kept the Law perfectly, they are the same as uncircumcised in the sight of God.

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**Romans 2:26.**

*Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

Notice that Paul did not say that the uncircumcision kept the Law. Instead he mentioned them keeping the "righteousness" of the Law (this verse) and "fulfilling" the Law (Romans 2:27)--there is a difference. A person can fulfill the righteousness of the Law through faith in Jesus, but no one, Jew or Gentile, can keep the Law.

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**Romans 2:28.**

*For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither [is that] circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

As with so many commandments of the Old Testament, circumcision was an outward sign of a greater inward reality. Paul used this term "sign" in referring to the circumcision of Abraham in Romans 4:11. The Jews of the first century had ignored the circumcision of the heart and had



focused all their attention on the flesh (1 Samuel 16:7). Paul was clarifying that it is the condition of the heart, not the flesh, that makes someone a child of God.

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**Romans 2:29.**

*But he [is] a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision [is that] of the heart, in the spirit, [and] not in the letter; whose praise [is] not of men, but of God.*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

This is a remarkable statement. Paul was saying that those who have been born again through faith in Jesus have been circumcised in their hearts (Colossians 2:11-12) and are the true Jews. They aren't Jews in nationality or religion, but they are the true people of God. Paul dealt with this in more detail in Romans 9 and clearly made a case that Gentiles who are united with Christ in the new birth are now God's people. Paul made the same point in Ga 3, saying that those who are saved through faith in Jesus are now Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:16, 22, and 26-29). This leaves no doubt that the church is now God's chosen people on earth.

This does not mean that God has forsaken the Jews. Paul dealt with that issue in Ro 9. There are still prophecies that apply to the physical nation of Israel, and they will be fulfilled. However, the New Testament church, composed of Jews and Gentiles, is now God's kingdom on earth.

Paul's statement here definitely places the spirit in the heart of man. This has led some to believe that the heart and spirit are the same. However, 1Pe 3:4 refers to the spirit of man as the hidden man of the heart, implying that the spirit comprises only a part of the heart. The heart of man is actually made up of two parts: The soul and the spirit. This is the reason the Scripture speaks of having two minds in our hearts (James 4:8) and why we must believe with all our hearts (Acts 8:37), not just a part (see [Matthew 12:34](#)).

The Greek word that is used here for "letter" is "GRAMMA" and literally means "a writing, i.e. a letter, note, epistle, book, etc." (Strong's Concordance). Paul was saying that circumcision is spiritual rather than natural. True circumcision is a born-again nature and not a mark in the flesh.

**Romans 3:1**

*What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit [is there] of circumcision?*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

**Romans 3:1:** Paul had just proven that the Jews were as guilty as the pagans whom they disdained. This led to the question, "What advantage is there in being a Jew?" Paul gave the most important answer to that question in Romans 3:2 and then addressed the issue more in Romans 9:4-5.

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**Romans 3:2**

*Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

The main advantage that the Jews had over others was that God had committed His Word unto them. They not only had the intuitive knowledge of God (see [note at Ro 1:18](#)), but they also had a written record of God's instructions that should have served as an added restraint from departing from God. They, however, had missed the true intent of God's Law and therefore were not taking advantage of the benefits God's Word afforded them.

The Greek word for "oracles" is "LOGION," and it means "an utterance (of God)" (Strong's Concordance). Therefore, this is speaking of the Word of God that was committed to the Jews. In the Old Testament, the word "oracle" was also used to designate the innermost part of the temple, since the Ark of the Covenant was kept there (1Kings 6:5, 16, 19-23, 31, 7:49, 8:6, 8; 2 Chronicles 3:16, 4:20, 5:7, 9; and Psalms 28:2).

The word "oracles" is used four times in the New Testament (Ac 7:38, this verse, Heb 5:12, and 1Pe 4:11). In each of these instances, the word is clearly referring to the Word of God.

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**Romans 3:3**

*For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

Paul was using the phrase "the faith of God" in this verse interchangeably with the phrase "the oracles of God" in Ro 3:2. He was saying that the unbelief of the Jews did not make the Word of God, or the promises of God, without effect. Therefore, the Word of God is the faith of God. No wonder faith comes by hearing God's Word: God's Word contains His faith.

Paul was asking the question, "If some of the Jews did not believe God's Word, does that make God's Word of no effect?" The answer to this question is a resounding "no" (Romans 3:4). However, Mark 7:13 says we make the Word of God of none effect through our traditions. What's the harmony between these two verses?

People can make God's Word of no effect in their personal lives. Hebrew 4:2 says God's Word will not profit people unless they mix it with faith. So the Word will not profit anyone who doesn't believe it, but God's Word itself doesn't lose any power. That is what Paul was stating here. The unbelief of the Jewish nation as a whole did not void the promises of God concerning salvation through a savior. The promises of salvation were of no effect to the individuals who rejected Jesus, but to those who will put their faith in Jesus as Messiah, the Word of God still has its power to save.

Talking about the relationship between the faith of God and the word of God, let me take a moment to look at faith of Jesus and faith in Jesus. It is absolutely true that we are called to have faith in Jesus. The bible also says the faith of Jesus is given to all that believe.

Galatians 3:22

But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

Therefore, as we can say that there is nothing too hard for God. Because he has given us his faith, and because it is not our faith, but his faith that does the work, we can say with authority, is there anything too hard for me. A new light is shined on, I can do all things through Christ who strengtheth me. For, God himself said, that he has given every man **THE** measure of faith, and that measure of faith of faith is at least capable of literally moving mountains. Whatever there is to do that is above and beyond the moving of mountains, that we have an earnest desire to do, and which is in accordance with his will, well first let us focus on the works that I do you will do also. Then we can give meaning to the greater works. Until we get to that point, let us not say, Jesus had the full anointing of the Holy Spirit, and we only have a partial anointing. Therefore, there are things that Jesus did, that we can not do. We will worry about that when we get there.

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**Romans 3:4**

*God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

This is the first of ten times that Paul used the expression "God forbid" in the book of Romans (this verse, 3:6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, and 11). He also used this expression four other times in his other epistles (1 Corinthians 6:15; Galatians 2:17, 3:21, and 6:14).

The Greek words that are used here for "God forbid" are "ME GINOMAI" meaning "let it not be...God forbid...far be it" (Vine's Expository Dictionary) and express emphatic denial of the false conclusion that someone might draw from his teaching.

This phrase "let God be true, but every man a liar" is given in response to the question of Romans 3:3 (see [note 5 at that verse](#)). Paul was stating that God and His promises are always true even if people don't believe Him. However, other applications of this truth can benefit us greatly.

When anyone or anything contradicts a promise made to us in God's Word, we need to reckon God to be true and that person or thing to be lying. We need to believe that what God's Word says about our prosperity is true (2 Corinthians 8:9 and 3 John 2), instead of what our checkbooks say. We need to

believe that we were healed by His stripes (Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 8:17, and 1Peter 2:24), instead of believing what the x-rays show. In every aspect of our lives, we need to believe God's Word above what we see or hear.

This is a quotation from David out of Psalms 51:4 when he was repenting of his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband. David was admitting his sinfulness and proclaiming God's complete justification in judging his sin in whatever way He saw fit. David's sin had not made God unholy; it made David unholy. In his sinfulness, David saw the holiness of God more clearly than ever.

This is what Paul was drawing from this Old Testament passage. He was saying that in a similar manner, God retained His holiness even when His people were unholy. It was the Jews, not God, who suffered from not believing God's Word.

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**Romans 3:5.**

*But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? [Is] God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

Paul had just explained that the Jews' faithlessness did not make God unfaithful to His Word (see [note 5 at Romans 3:3](#)). Therefore, when you consider how unfaithful we have been to God, it makes God's mercy and faithfulness appear even greater. So this brings up new questions: If our unrighteousness reveals God's righteousness or causes it to be seen in an even greater way, then are we actually helping God? Would it be right for God to judge us for something like that? Of course, Paul's answer to that is another "God forbid."

It is true that we would never have seen the love and goodness of God as clearly if we had not sinned, but that does not mean our sins were a good thing. This is one piece of information that the Lord never wanted us to know by experience. None of us will be able to tell God on the Day of Judgment that our sins just helped Him reveal how great His mercy was. The Lord will be totally just in bringing His judgment on all those who refuse His offer of mercy given through Jesus, His Son.

Paul was saying that the logic he had just been using was not from God but was carnal logic. He was not saying this as God's spokesman; he was expressing a thought held by opponents of the Gospel so that he could expose the error in it. Therefore, he gave a disclaimer in parentheses that this was not God's wisdom but man's.

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**Romans 8:29.**

*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

**Note 1:**

The word "foreknowledge" refers to God knowing who would accept His offer of salvation in advance of them actually doing it. The Scriptures teach that we (believers) were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). That's how infinite God's ability is to know our choices in advance.

The Scriptures also reveal that there are some things God does not know. Twice in the book of Jeremiah, God said the fact that people would offer their children as sacrifices to demon gods never even came into His mind (Jeremiah 19:5 and 32:35). There are some things that God Himself said He had never foreseen.

It is most probable that the Lord has the ability to know everything in advance, but He simply doesn't choose to exercise that ability in every situation. He told us to be wise concerning that which is good, and simple (or innocent) concerning that which is evil (Romans 16:19). He also told us to think on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, and things that have virtue and praise (Philippians 4:8). That's the way He desires us to be because that's the way He is.

Therefore, when God acted surprised that Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden tree, He probably was. As we have already pointed out from Ephesians 1:4, God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. He knew there would be a transgression and a need for redemption before man was even created. But apparently, He did not utilize His foreknowledge to the extent that He knew every move that man was making. No reason is given for this, but certainly one reason is that an absolute use of God's foreknowledge would hinder His relationship with man.

God sent two angels to Sodom and Gomorrah to see if their actions were really as bad as had been reported to Him (Genesis 18:20-19:29). The Lord tested Abraham (Genesis 22:1-10). After the test, He said, "For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" (Genesis 22:12). The Lord repented for choosing Saul to be king when He saw the way he turned out (1 Samuel 15:11). The Scripture contains many other examples besides these.

God's ability to know all things in advance is limitless, but by His choice, God does not know every detail. Understanding foreknowledge provides the foundation for understanding predestination (see note 2 at this verse), calling (Romans 8:30), and election (1 Peter 1:2).

### **Note 2:**

This verse provides the key for unlocking the answer to the doctrine of predestination. Predestination is dependent on foreknowledge (see note 1 at this verse).

The word "predestinate" means to predetermine. "Predestinate" and its variant "predestinated" are only used four times in the New Testament (Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:5, and 11). People have interpreted this doctrine as saying that God predetermines everything in people's lives, including whether they will be saved or lost. This interpretation is not consistent with other doctrines or examples in Scripture. This belief will destroy people's motivation to fight evil and do good. If God predetermines everything that happens in people's lives, then everything that happens to them is God's will, even sin. That is not true.

This verse limits God's predestination to only those whom He foreknew. This means that only those people who God knew would accept His offer of salvation have been predestined. He does not predestine people to be saved or lost. Those whom He foreknew in Christ have been predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ. As we can tell by observation, God doesn't even force that to happen. With some Christians, this will not occur until they receive their glorified bodies, but it will occur.

God gave all people free will, and God will not violate that free will except in judgment. Even in judgment, God is only enforcing the choices that people have already made of their own free will. All people have a God-given right to go to hell if they want to.

Just as in Ro 8:28, God works everything together for good for those who already love Him. And even then He does not take away their free will. Everything that happens to them is not good, and it is not from God. However, God, in His infinite wisdom, can work it together for good (see [note 7 at Romans 8:28](#)). Romans 8:29 is simply continuing to develop the truth that God is for man and has predetermined that those who have come to Him for salvation will be saved to the uttermost.

Understood correctly, this verse provides great reassurance to believers that God is for them and working with them to bring them to the complete stature of the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

**Note 3:**

This English word "firstborn" was translated from the Greek word "PROTOTOKOS." According to Strong's Concordance, this is a compound Greek word comprised of "PROTOS," which means "foremost (in time, place, order or importance)," and "TIKTO," which means "to produce (from seed...)." Therefore, this word "firstborn" could refer to either first in order or importance. Both of these applications are true of Jesus.

Although others were raised from the dead before Jesus (see [note 3 at Mark 16:6](#)), Jesus was the first one to be raised from the dead never to die again. Jesus was also the firstborn in the sense of importance, since His resurrection made all other resurrections possible.

In context, Paul was stressing that we believers are predestined to be just like Jesus, then he drew from scripture that prophesied Jesus being the firstborn (Psalms 89:27). Therefore, the point being made is the extent that we will be conformed to the image of Jesus. There are other children who will become just like Jesus, and it is in this sense that "firstborn" is used here.

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**Romans 9:1.**

*I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

Paul was going to great lengths to verify that what he was saying was the truth. This needed to be stated because Paul's statement in Romans 9:3 would certainly have been interpreted as a hyperbole (exaggeration) if there had not been some clarification.

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**Romans 9:2.**

*That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

This is not a contradiction to other statements by Paul (2 Corinthians 7:13; Ga 5:22-23; Php 1:4, 18, 2:2, 18, 4:4; Colossians 1:24; 1 Thessalonians 3:9, 5:16; and Philemon 7). Paul did operate in the joy of the Holy Ghost, just as he told others to do. However, there was this continual heaviness and sorrow in his heart when it came to the unbelieving Jews.

This is comparable to those who have lost loved ones who were very dear to them. In the process of time, they "get over it" to the point that they may be considered very joyful people, but there is always that vacancy in their hearts. Similarly, Paul was rejoicing in the Lord, but he always had this great longing in his heart for the salvation of the Jews.

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**Romans 9:3.**

*For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:*

What a statement! Paul was saying that he would go to hell in the place of the Jews if that would accomplish their salvation. This is nothing less than the perfect "AGAPE" love (see [note 4 at John 13:35](#)) that Jesus demonstrated when He died for our sins.

Although this desire on Paul's part is commendable, there is nothing that he could have accomplished that Jesus hadn't already accomplished completely. Paul was specifically commissioned by the Lord to go to the Gentiles, yet we see him repeatedly going to the Jews, even after he said he wouldn't do that anymore (see [note 2 at Acts 13:14](#)). Paul even went to Jerusalem, apparently against the instruction of the Holy Ghost (see [note 4 at Acts 21:4](#)), and was more than willing to lay down his life for the sake of the Jews (Acts 21:13). This illustrated his great love for the Jewish people as he was describing here.

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**Romans 9:6.**

*Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they [are] not all Israel, which are of Israel:*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

Paul had just expressed a compassion for the Jewish race that was so strong that he was willing to be damned in their place if that would have produced their salvation (see [note 3 at Romans 9:3](#)). As he said in Romans 9:2, this produced "great heaviness and continual sorrow."

According to Romans 9:4-5, one of the reasons he longed for the salvation of the Jews so intensely was because he himself was a Jew and he was acutely aware that Christ was the Jewish Messiah. How ironic it was that Jesus came unto His own and His own received Him not (John 1:11). Here Paul began to relate the reasoning that had enabled him to cope with the Jews' tragic rejection of Jesus.

The promises made to Abraham and his descendants were not made to his physical descendants but to his spiritual seed (Romans 9:6-8). Therefore, the true people of God have not rejected their Messiah. There is a body of believers comprised of believing Jews and Gentiles, and they are the true Israel of God. To back this up, Paul cited the two Old Testament examples of Isaac (Romans 9:9) and Jacob (Romans 9:10-13) to illustrate how the blessing of God was not passed on through the normal method of inheritance but through election.

Paul had expressed some of these same thoughts twice before in this epistle, and he used the same reasoning in his letter to the Galatians (Romans 2:28-29, 4:12-16; Galatians 3:16, and 6:16).

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**Romans 9:8.**

*That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these [are] not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

Paul cited six Old Testament references to make his point that God's promises to Abraham and his "seed" were made to the spiritual offspring of Abraham, not the physical.

First, Isaac was not the firstborn son of Abraham, entitled to the birthright and blessing, yet he obtained both because he was chosen by God. Next, Jacob was not the firstborn either, yet he was chosen by God. These two examples confirm that God's promise was not inherited by birth.

Paul also pointed out that before Jacob and his twin brother, Esau, were born, God told Rebekah that the elder would serve the younger. They weren't even born yet, so they had not done any good or evil that caused God to make this choice. This means that the blessing of Abraham was not obtained by individual performance either but was based solely on God's choosing by grace.

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**Romans 9:11.**

*For [the children] being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

Paul was citing these Old Testament examples to show that those who were considered the children of Abraham were not his physical descendants, but they were chosen by God, in this case, before they were born. This proves God's election is not based on birth or performance (see [note 2 at Romans 9:8](#)).

However, some people have interpreted this verse and the quotation from Mal 1:2-3 in Ro 9:13 as an example of extreme predestination. They reason that Esau was hated by God before he was born (see [note 5 at Romans 9:12](#)). Therefore, some people are predestined by God for damnation, while some are elected to salvation before they are ever born. This means people have no choice in the matter. That is not what these verses are saying. As explained in [note 2 at Romans 8:29](#), God's predestination is based on His foreknowledge (see [note 1 at Romans 8:29](#)). Only those whom God foreknew would accept Him have been elected and predestinated. God did not force Jacob and Esau to make the choices they made. But through His foreknowledge, He was able to foresee who would respond to Him, and that is the one He chose.

The doctrine of election is based on God's foreknowledge (see [note 1 at Romans 8:29](#)) the same way that predestination is based on His foreknowledge (see [note 2 at Romans 8:29](#)). This can be clearly seen in 1Pe 1:2, which says we are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." God does not choose people independent of their free will. Instead, through His foreknowledge, He knows who will choose Him, and those are the individuals He elects to be His own.

**[Note 2 – Romans 2:29.](#)**

There is no record in Scripture that the individual Esau ever served the individual Jacob. However, Esau's posterity (Edomites, Genesis 32:3) did serve Jacob's posterity (1 Chronicles 18:13). Although Paul was making reference to the actual birth of these two individuals, the prophecy given to Rebekah and its fulfillment were referring to the nations that came from these men.



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**Romans 9:12.**

*It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.*

There is no record in Scripture that the individual Esau ever served the individual Jacob. However, Esau's posterity (Edomites, Genesis 32:3) did serve Jacob's posterity (1 Chronicles 18:13). Although Paul was making reference to the actual birth of these two individuals, the prophecy given to Rebekah and its fulfillment were referring to the nations that came from these men.

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**Romans 9:13.**

*As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*

**Note 6.**

God did not hate Esau and love Jacob while they were still in their mother's womb. He did choose Jacob over Esau as the inheritor of Abraham's blessing before they were born, but Esau could have walked with God and have been blessed by God if he had chosen to do so.

Malachi 1:2-3 says, "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." This was written in approximately 557-525 B.C., thousands of years after the birth of Esau and Jacob, so this is not speaking of God hating Esau at birth. There is no mention in Scripture that God hated the individual Esau. This reference to Esau was referring to the nation of Edom (Esau's descendants) in the same way that the term Israel often referred to the entire nation of Israel, not the individual (Genesis 32:28). God was saying that He had rejected the nation of Edom and had chosen the nation of Israel.

Paul quoted from Malachi, not to show that God hated Esau and loved Jacob while they were still in their mother's womb, but rather to confirm that the choice God made before they were born, based on His foreknowledge (see [note 1 at Romans 8:29](#)), was the right choice. Jacob went on to become a mighty man of God, and Esau despised the things of God. God's choice of Jacob didn't cause this to happen. This quotation from Malachi simply confirms that God's foreknowledge was accurate.

Jacob was called to a higher position than his brother, Esau, before they were born, but that does not display any rejection of Esau on God's part. That is comparable to God choosing certain people to be pastors while others are called to be deacons. The deacons are not inferior to the pastors. They are simply called to different positions. Jacob and Esau were called to different positions before they had done any good or evil, to illustrate that election was not based on performance but choice.

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**Romans 9:14.**

*What shall we say then? [Is there] unrighteousness with God? God forbid.*

[Audio commentary on this verse](#)

Paul was seeking to stop anyone from interpreting his statements in a way that would make it look like God was unfair in His dealings with man. God can extend mercy to an individual without treating others unjustly. Just as in the parable that Jesus gave in Matthew 20:1-16, God treats everyone fairly, but to some He chooses to give extra mercy. Does that mean He is unjust? Not at all.

If God chooses to call individuals to account for their actions and choices they have made of their own free will, He is completely justified to do that at any time. In Luke 13:1-9, Jesus mentioned the people whom Pilate had killed and mingled their blood with the sacrifices, and the people on whom the tower in Siloam fell and were killed. He raised the question (Lu 13:2 and 4), "Were these people worse sinners than others to suffer this judgment?" He answered His own question by saying that all of them deserved such judgment, but God in His mercy had spared them (see [note 2 at Luke 13:2](#)).

He then immediately followed that with the parable about the man with an unproductive tree in his vineyard. He was going to cut down this dead tree and replace it, but the vine dresser interceded for the tree. The owner then gave him some extra time to see if he could revive it (see [note 1 at Luke 13:6](#)). Likewise, people all deserve judgment, but through things such as the intercession of others, God will sometimes show extra mercy to certain individuals.

However, if He chose not to extend mercy to anyone and He called everyone's accounts due, He would be completely justified in doing so. It's His choice. God has never brought judgment on anyone without being righteous in doing so. Likewise, He has never extended mercy to any individual that made His treatment of someone else unfair.

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**Romans 9:16.**

*So then [it is] not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

There is a very subtle trap that many people who have been used of God fall into. They see what God has accomplished through them, and they begin reasoning, "God must use me because of my great faithfulness." But that is not the case. God has never had anyone qualified working for Him yet. God is a lot more merciful than we are faithful

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**Romans 9:17.**

*For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

Some people have taken this word from God about Pharaoh and made a paragraph out of it. They have drawn conclusions that God predetermines everything in people's lives to the degree that free will doesn't exist. That is not what the Lord was speaking of here.

We can be assured that Pharaoh had already had ample opportunity to respond to God prior to the time that God began to harden his heart. Since Pharaoh had already made his choice, even to the point that he proclaimed himself to be a deity and commanded the Egyptians to worship him, God was not unrighteous in bringing him into judgment for this.

God did not make Pharaoh the way he was, but God used, for His glory, the way Pharaoh had chosen to be. God exalted Pharaoh and gave him leadership of the nation, knowing full well how he would respond to His demands to let His people go. Since Pharaoh had already hardened his heart

toward God, God was not unjust in continuing to harden his heart further until His glory was manifest completely.

This verse is depicting God as using Pharaoh's hardened heart for His glory, but Pharaoh had already had his chance. God simply upheld his choice and received glory through His triumph over Pharaoh and all his host.

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**Romans 9:19.**

*For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

Some people have taken this word from God about Pharaoh and made a paragraph out of it. They have drawn conclusions that God predetermines everything in people's lives to the degree that free will doesn't exist. That is not what the Lord was speaking of here.

We can be assured that Pharaoh had already had ample opportunity to respond to God prior to the time that God began to harden his heart. Since Pharaoh had already made his choice, even to the point that he proclaimed himself to be a deity and commanded the Egyptians to worship him, God was not unrighteous in bringing him into judgment for this.

God did not make Pharaoh the way he was, but God used, for His glory, the way Pharaoh had chosen to be. God exalted Pharaoh and gave him leadership of the nation, knowing full well how he would respond to His demands to let His people go. Since Pharaoh had already hardened his heart toward God, God was not unjust in continuing to harden his heart further until His glory was manifest completely.

This verse is depicting God as using Pharaoh's hardened heart for His glory, but Pharaoh had already had his chance. God simply upheld his choice and received glory through His triumph over Pharaoh and all his host.

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**Romans 9:20.**

*Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed [it], Why hast thou made me thus?*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

The truth that Paul was expressing here is the overall point that was made in the book of Job. God never did explain Himself to Job as Job had insisted that He do. Instead, God rebuked Job for his "know-it-all" attitude (Job 38:18). God basically asked Job what right he had to maintain his own integrity at the expense of God's (Job 40:8). Job got the message when God spoke to him from a whirlwind, and he humbled himself (Job 42:2-6). Paul's message should draw the same response from us.

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**Romans 9:24.**

*Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

Paul had started explaining in Romans 9:6 that there was a true people of God, not based on nationality, but on faith in God. Here he gave four quotes (Romans 9:25-29) from two Old Testament prophets to show that this was not a new concept but had been prophesied hundreds of years before.

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**Romans 9:27.**

*Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

This verse could read, "**only** a remnant shall be saved." That is the point Paul was making. His next reference from Isaiah (Romans 9:29) complements this one, and it is clearly stressing that there will be very few Jews who are truly God's people.

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**Romans 9:30.**

*What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

**Note 1:**

Paul was saying that this was the conclusion or the summary of his point in this chapter.

**Note 2:**

This is another one of Paul's radical statements. How can it be that people who are not seeking to be righteous can become righteous? The answer to this question lies in God's grace.

By grace, God has provided righteousness for all people, regardless of their actions. If people will believe and receive this gift, God will reckon them righteous. This is what happened to the Gentiles. They had a reputation for not seeking God (Ephesians 4:17-19 and 1 Peter 4:3), yet the Gentiles as a whole accepted God's gift of salvation, while the Jews as a whole, who were seeking after God, rejected His gift. The reason for this was given by Paul in Ro 9:32-33 (see [note 5 at Romans 9:32](#)).

People who don't understand God's grace will always be confused and unbelieving that a person who hasn't lived a morally good life can be righteous in the sight of God, while a morally good person can be unrighteous in His sight. Righteousness is based on faith, not actions.

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**Romans 9:32.**

*Wherefore? Because [they sought it] not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

**Note 3:**

Why is it that a person who is seeking so hard to please God can be rejected, while a person who has not sought God at all can come into a righteous relationship with Him? This is an important question, and its answer is one of the most profound doctrines in Scripture.

Paul gave the answer to his own question. The answer is faith and its object. The Jews were zealous (Ro 10:2) for the things of God, but their faith was in themselves. They were trusting that they could earn God's favor by their acts of righteousness. On the other hand, the Gentiles had no holiness to trust in. So when they heard the Gospel that Jesus paid man's debt, they readily accepted His "gift" of salvation, while the religious Jews could not abandon their trust in themselves for salvation.

This same problem exists today. Millions of church people are trying to live holy lives, but they do not have a true faith in Jesus as their Savior. If they were to stand before God and He was to ask them what they had done to deserve salvation, they would immediately start recounting all their acts of holiness: church attendance, financial giving, etc. Regardless of how good their actions are compared to others, they always come short of the perfect standard of God (see notes 5-6 at Romans 3:23). The only response to this kind of question that would grant them entrance to heaven is for them to say that their only claim to salvation is faith in Jesus as their Savior. Anything more or less is damned.

**Note 4:**

There is a difference between works of faith (1 Thessalonians 1:3 and 2Th 1:11) and works of the Law (Ga 2:16; 3:2, 5, and 10). The difference is not in the action but in the attitude. A work of the Law is some act of righteousness or holiness that is being done to earn the favor of God. A work of faith may be the same act of righteousness or holiness, but it is done as a labor of love (1 Thessalonians 1:3). It is done not to obtain favor but in gratitude for the favor that has already been extended to us in Christ. Works of the Law and faith in Jesus are opposites (Romans 11:6).

**Note 5:**

Jesus is the "stumblingstone" that Paul was speaking of. God has placed Jesus directly in the path of every person. Those who fail to put their complete trust in Jesus because they are trusting in themselves will stumble and fall into hell, while those who believe in Him will never be ashamed (Ro 9:33).

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**Romans 9:33.**

*As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

**Note 6.:**

Those who are offended at Jesus are the ones who are trusting in themselves. They feel they will be accepted with God because they think they are holy enough on their own. It is humbling to admit that all of our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). This is why the religious people have always been the persecutors of true Christians (see [note 6 at Mark 15:10](#)).

**Note 7.**

This quotation does not appear in the Old Testament in these exact words. It is most probable that Paul was quoting the last part of Isaiah 28:16. If so, Paul substituted the words "be ashamed" for Isaiah's words, "make haste." In the context of war, making haste is descriptive of a person who has been shamed in battle.

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**Romans 10:02.**

*For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

This scripture goes contrary to many religious teachings. Many people believe that it's not necessary to believe the right thing--just as long as people believe something, they'll be all right. However, Paul disproved this kind of thinking by saying in this passage that their zeal was without knowledge and therefore they were not saved.

The Jews were very zealous about their religion, but that wasn't enough. It's not enough just to believe; people have to believe the truth. Even those who are sincere can be sincerely wrong. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

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**Romans 10:03.**

*For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#)

This verse describes the condition of much of the church today. Most people are unaware that there are two kinds of righteousness. Only one type of righteousness is acceptable to God.

One form of righteousness that Paul described here is one's own righteousness (Philippians 3:9). These are the acts of holiness that we do in an attempt to fulfill the commands of the Old Testament Law. This is an imperfect righteousness because human nature is imperfect and incapable of fulfilling the Law (Romans 8:3). Therefore, our own righteousness, which is according to the Law, is inadequate. Isaiah said it this way in Isaiah 64:6, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."

In contrast, God's righteousness is perfect. Also, God's righteousness is not something that we do but something that we receive as a gift through faith in Christ (Romans 10:5).

Paul made it very clear in this verse that it's not possible to trust in our own righteousness and in God's righteousness also. If we believe that we must earn God's acceptance by our holy actions, we cannot be believing in God's righteousness, which is a gift. It has to be one or the other; we cannot mix the two. Righteousness is not what Jesus has done for us plus some minimum standard of holiness that we have to accomplish (Romans 11:6).

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**Romans 10:04.**

*For Christ [is] the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

[Audio commentary on this verse.](#) ■

The Greek word that was translated "end" here is "TELOS," and it means "the point aimed at as a limit, i.e. (by implication) the conclusion of an act or state (termination...)" (Strong's Concordance).

This verse does not say that Christ is the end of the Law but rather that Christ is the end of the Law for the purpose of righteousness. This means that people no longer become righteous, or justified in the sight of God, by how well they perform the deeds of the Law (Luke 1:6). However, the Law still has useful purposes for New Testament believers.

The Old Testament Law still reveals to us God's holiness, which we should seek to emulate. It must be understood, however, that our failure to comply does not bring the punishments pronounced in the Law since Jesus bore those for us (Galatians 3:13). Our compliance does not earn the blessings of God either; those only come by faith in Christ (Romans 4:8-13). We also need to be acquainted with the Old Testament Law so that we will better understand our New Covenant and God's historical dealings with mankind.

Also, Paul said to Timothy, "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully" (1Ti 1:8). He then said that the Law was not made for a righteous person (i.e., a Christian, 2 Corinthians 5:21) but rather for an unbeliever (1 Timothy 1:9-10). So, a Christian can still use the Law when ministering to unbelievers to show them their sin and their need for a savior (Romans 3:19).

As Christians, we should not discard the Old Testament Law. When understood in the light of the New Covenant, the Old Covenant provides us with invaluable revelation of God. Paul was simply stressing that the time when people sought to be justified through the keeping of the Old Testament Law is over. Now, people must put their faith in Christ, and Christ alone, for salvation.

Someone might ask, "Was anyone ever justified by the keeping of the Law?" The answer is yes. One person did become righteous through His keeping of the Old Testament Law. That person was Jesus. One of the reasons the Old Testament Law was given was so that Jesus could legally earn man's redemption. Now that the purchase has been completed, that function of the Law is over.

Romans 10:4: The phrase "to every one that believeth" limits this benefit only to believers (Christians). To those who do not receive God's gift of salvation, the Law is still in effect (John 3:36). Those who fail to believe on Jesus will have to answer to God for each and every one of their transgressions of the Law.